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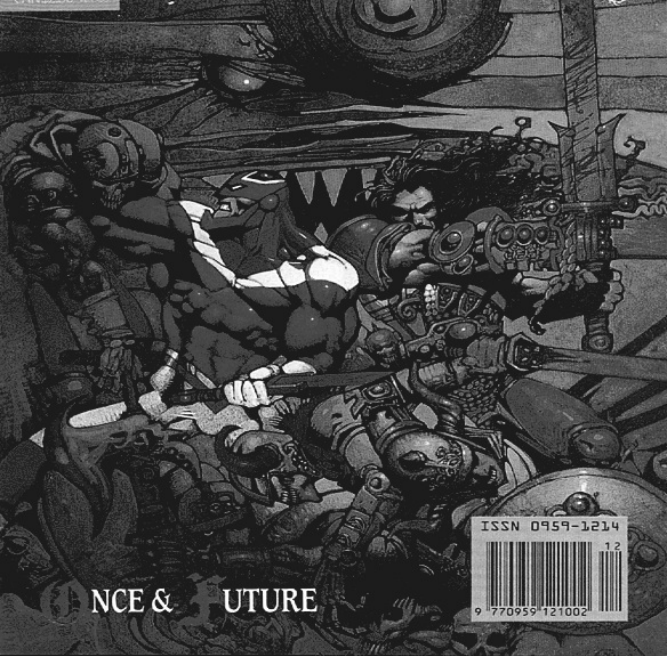
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The NIGHTS of PENDRAGON



ANCE & FUTURE

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"AND I AWOKE AND
FOUND ME HERE,
ON THE COLD HILL
SIDE."
JOHN KEETS,
LA BELLE DAME
SANS MERCI!

"IN THIS DECAYING HOLE
ALONG THE MOUNTAINS
IN THE FAINT MOONLIGHT,
THE GRASS IS SINGING
OVER THE TUMBLED GRAVES,
ABOUT THE CHAPEL,
THERE IS THE EMPTY CHAPEL,
ONLY THE WIND'S HOME."
T. S. ELIOT
THE WASTE LAND

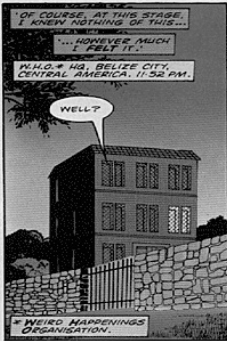
FOR THREE DAYS, ALL HE SAW AROUND
HIM WAS THE SCARRING PROOF OF
MAN'S UNDERESTIMATION OF HIS
OWN DESTRUCTIVE POWER.



OFTEN IN HIS LIFE, HE HAD
BEEN A HERO. NOW HE
WAS A MURDERER.

THREE DAYS BEFORE, HE
HAD KILLED HIS FRIEND.

LIKE SO MANY BEFORE, HE,
TOO, HAD UNDERESTIMATED
HIS OWN POWER TO DESTROY.









THE KNIGHTS AND WARRIORS OF THE PENTANGLE KNEW ME AS GAWAIN. IN STRENGTH, I ALWAYS BESTED YOU, BUT NEVER IN NOBILITY. YOU DEFEATED THE FOES OF THE LAND WHILE I TREKKED LONG AND HARD AND FOUND THE CHAPEL OF THE GREEN KNIGHT...

...AND STRUCK A BARGAIN WITH HIM. SADLY, THE BARGAIN'S NOT BEEN HONoured.

WHAT?



THAT BODES ILL FOR ALL OF US.

GAWAIN? YOU SAY YOUR NAME IS GAWAIN? WHO ARE YOU?



THEY TOLD OF US BOTH IN EQUAL MEASURE — YOUR DEEDS, MY VALOUR, YOUR TRIUMPHS, MY PACT...



YOUR GRAIL MELTS LIKE RAIN IN THESE HEAVY DAYS. ONLY MY PACT MATTERS NOW. HELP ME, FRIEND.

OTHERWISE, ALL WE HOLD VALUABLE WILL FALL.

SEE! ALREADY A CHALLENGE! A MAIDEN BESET BY UNGODLY FOE. GIRD UP, MY SHIRKING BROTHER, AND JOIN THE BLOODY FRAY!

A MAIDEN IN DISTRESS? ARE YOU KIDDING?



YOU OLD DOG, YOU ALWAYS WERE A LADIES' MAN!



'RENTING THE CHOPPER
HAD BEEN EASY. TWO
DAYS. LABORIOUS
FLIGHT HAD NOT.

'BUT I'D HAVE FLOWN
TO HELL AND BACK TO
AVOID THIS NIGHTMARE.



'THE STORM HAD
DOWNED THE CHOPPER.
THEN THESE THINGS
HAD COME FORTH...
NOWHERE AND TORE
THE PILOT LIMB
FROM LIMB.



AAAAH!

'I'D NEVER IMAGINED
I'D DIE THIS WAY.
THIS UNBELIEVABLE,
STUPID, STUPID
WAY.

'AND THEN, OH THEN...
A NIGHTMARE OF BLOOD...
CUTTING, STRIKING...



MY LADY
KATE!

SHRIEK!

...SAVIORS EVEN MORE
DREADFULLY STRONG
THAN MY FOES...



ME
MCCLELLAN!
AAAAH!



HERE,
BROTHER!

SHRECK







"FOLLOW ME!" HE SAID, AND WITHOUT A CHOICE WE DID, THE CAPTAIN AND I.

"AS WE MARCHED, THE MAN CALLED GAWAIN BEGAN TO RECOUNT AN OLD TALE. WE DID NOT ASK HIM TO, BUT IT WAS AS IF HE FELT IT NEEDED TELLING...."

"LORD ALONE KNEW WHERE WE WERE GOING. WE DIDN'T ASK. I WAS AFRAID I KNEW."



HE RODE IN ON NEW YEAR'S DAY AFTER MASS... A GIANT MAN, A WILD GREEN KNIGHT WITH AN AXE AT HIS SIDE THAT FEW COULD EASILY LIFT AND A CHALLENGE THAT FEWER STILL WISHED TO TAKE...

A BLOW FOR A BLOW. A LIFE FOR A LIFE. HE CALLED IT A GAME.



I TOOK UP THE CHALLENGE... TO STRIKE AT HIM WITH HIS AXE AND IN RETURN, ACCEPT A SIMILAR BLOW.

IT SEEMED FOOLISH...THE AXE WAS SHARP, MY STRENGTH WAS GREAT. I SCOFFED AT THE POSSIBILITY OF A RETURN BLOW, TOOK THE BLADE...

...AND STRUCK OFF HIS HEAD.



I LAUGH AT IT NOW, BUT THEN IT CHILLED ME TO THE MARROW...

HE PICKED UP HIS OWN HEAD WHICH, HELD IN HIS MAILED FISTS, TOLD ME TO ATTEND HIM A YEAR HENCE, AT THE GREEN CHAPEL.



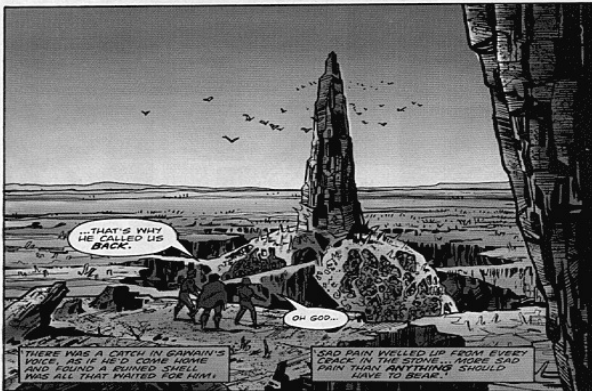
I JOURNEYED ACROSS PERILOUS LANDS TO FIND THE PLACE AND ACCEPT MY HALF OF THE BARGAIN.

KNEELING BEFORE HIM, I LEARNED THE TRUE AND DEEPEST MEANING OF HIS GAME.



SPARED MY LIFE, OF COURSE, KNOWING THAT I WOULD NOT MEND AS HE COULD.

FOR HIM IT WAS ENOUGH THAT I HAD BEEN READY TO PAY MY DEBT, NO MATTER THE PRICE.



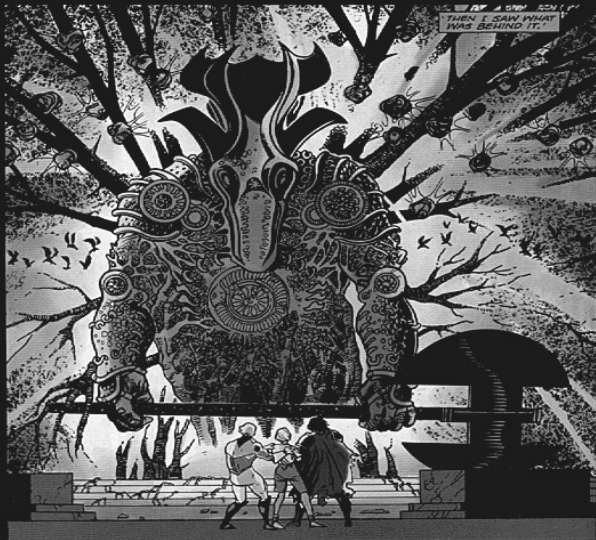




...BUT HE NEVER
GOT THE CHANCE.



"I'VE NEVER FOUND LIGHT
SO TERRIFYING BEFORE."



"THEN I SAW WHAT
WAS BEHIND IT."



MAY GOD
GUARD YOU.

YOU ARE
WELCOME TO MY
DWELLING, THOUGH
I KNOW NOT WHY
YOU HAVE COME.



YOU
CALLED ME!
I HEARD
YOUR CRIES!
DON'T YOU
KNOW ME?



I KNOW YOU, SON OF
LOT, NEPHEW OF ARTHUR.
I KNOW YOU, BUT I DID
NOT CALL YOU.

MY CRIES WERE
FOR NO MAN, THEY
WERE BUT CRIES
OF RAGE.



YET I
HEARD YOU!
YOU LIT AGAIN
THE FIRES IN
MY BLOOD! YOU
LOOKED THE
PENDRAGON
IN ME ONCE
MORE. I HAVE
COME TO
HONOUR YOU!



YOU SSSPEAK OF
HONOUR! 'T ISSS TOO
LATE FOR THAT...THE
WILD ISSS DYING...



...DYINGSSSS...

THE BOND IS
BROKEN, DEAR SIR.

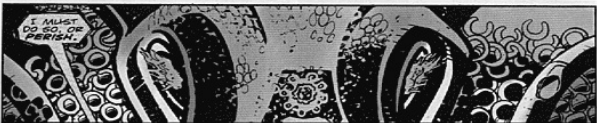


YOUR KIND,
FROM THE
NOBLEST TO THE
WEAKEST, HAS
ROBBED AND
PLUNDERED
THINGS NOT
YOURS TO TAKE...

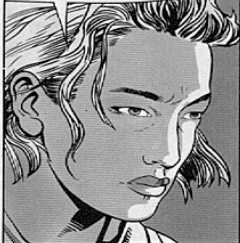
NOW THE
FRUIT IS
WASTED AND
POLLUTED. I
ROT.

SPLAT!





IT WOULD ONLY MEAN ANYTHING IF IT WAS AN **UNREMARKABLE** HUMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMON RABBLE, NOT AN **HONOURABLE, CHIVALROUS DEMI-GOD**. TAKE ME. TAKE ME AS REPAYMENT.



THIS TOO IS WORTHY, ADMIRABLE... BUT FAILING. WILLINGNESS BORNE OF GUILT IS AS USELESS TO ME AS HEROIC SACRIFICE.



ME, THEN.

NO...

DAI...

NOT BECAUSE I AM WILLING TO PLAY A HEROIC GAME...NOT BECAUSE I'M WRACKED WITH ANGRY GUILT...

...NOR EVEN BECAUSE IT WAS MEANT TO BE SO.



JUST BECAUSE IT IS NECESSARY.



YOU ACCEPTED ME BEFORE, FOR THE SAME REASON THAT YOU MUST DO SO AGAIN... IT WAS NEVER, AFTER ALL, YOUR WISH TO PUNISH.

NO, YOUR ONLY WISH WAS SIMPLY THAT WE TRUST YOU, CONSIDER AND RESPECT YOU, ALL YOU EVER ASKED OF MAN WAS THAT HE VALUE YOU.



AS I DID BEFORE, SO SHALL I NOW. YOUR BOND I ACCEPT...

AND RESPECT.

OH, WHY...

THIS ISN'T RIGHT...

IT IS TOO RIGHT. I HAVE NO MALICE, NO POINT TO PROVE, NO GUILT TO ASSUAGE. THIS ACT IS NATURAL. IT NEEDS NO MOTIVE, EXCEPT OBLIGATION, THAT WHICH ALL OF US SHOULD HAVE.



I WILL GIVE THE PENDRAGON IN ME TO THE WILD KNIGHT. IT WILL BOLSTER HIS FAILING STRENGTH, FEED THE DYING LANDS, BUT ONLY FOR A SHORT WHILE. YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO IN THAT TIME.

I'VE SEEN SOME OF THOSE WHO NEED THE BLAME, AT LEAST. THEIR TIME WILL COME. TRUST ME.



I DO, BE WELL, MY QUEEN.

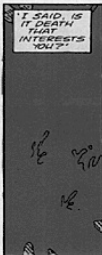
TELL DAI... I'M MORE SORRY THAN... THAN...

HE KNOWS. JUST FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS. AND LOOK AFTER LADY KATE.

I—

BE WELL, LANCELOT.









AND DID YOU LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

OMNI CORPORATION TOWER LONDON, 9.00 PM.

I SHOULD HAVE YOU ESCORTED FROM THE BUILDING, MRS MCCLELLAN.

THIS IS HARDLY ABOUT BUSINESS WOMEN IN THE NINETIES I WAS EXPECTING...

IF THAT WAS THE PRETEXT FOR YOU TO COME HERE AND TELL ME ELABORATE FAIRY TALES...

...I'D RATHER HAVE WASTED A FIVER ON A FANTASY POT-BOILER ON MY WAY TO WORK AND ENJOYED ITS INVENTION A GOOD DEAL MORE.

IT WAS A PRETEXT TO COME HERE WITH A WARNING.

YOUR CORPORATION SUFFERED AT THE SAVAGE HANDS OF THE WILD BECAUSE OF THE MONSTROSITIES YOU'VE SLEEPILY CONDONED. YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE NOT BY A LONG WAY, BUT LIKE ALL THE WORST, YOU'RE BEYOND THE REACH OF HUMAN LAW.



DON'T PRESUME YOU'RE SAFE HERE IN YOUR EXECUTIVE CASTLE. STOP NOW, OR I'LL COME BACK AND FIND YOU.

AND I HAVE SOME VERY POWERFUL FRIENDS.

HOW DARE YOU THREATEN ME, YOU LITTLE WHORE. I'M NOT AFRAID OF THAT SIDESHOW SCUM, CAPTAIN BRITAIN.



I WASN'T THINKING OF HIM.



